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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 001188

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [KU](#)
SUBJECT: SHAYKH MISHA'AL: KUWAIT'S EXTREMIST REHABILITATION
CENTER STILL IN "INITIAL STAGES"

Classified By: DCM Alan Misenheimer for reasons 1.4 b and d

1.(C) Summary: In a December 3 meeting with Ambassador, Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Deputy Chief Sh. Misha'al apportioned blame to both government and parliament in the current domestic crisis, but ventured no prediction on next steps. He revealed that the GTMO detainee rehabilitation center highlighted by the Kuwaiti PM during his September meeting with POTUS in Washington remains in initial stages and is not operational. Misha'al reiterated KNG's commitment to take part in Embassy Kuwait's security exercise scheduled for January. Misha'al, a half-brother and close adviser of the Amir, is influential well beyond the scope of his official post. End summary.

2.(C) Ambassador, accompanied by DCM, on December 2 called on Shaykh Misha'al al-Ahmed al-Jaber Al Sabah, Deputy Commander (but de facto commander) of the Kuwaiti National Guard (KNG). Sh. Misha'al is the Amir's half-brother. Despite his seemingly modest position, he takes part in the Amir's official travel and sensitive meetings and is widely regarded as the third most influential member of the ruling family.

3.(C) The Ambassador thanked Misha'al for the diligence and continuing cooperation of KNG's deployed unit at the Embassy compound, noting that the importance of physical security was underscored by the recent terrorist attacks in Mumbai. As on previous occasions, Misha'al stressed the KNG's commitment to protect the Embassy and the American community, and to strive constantly to improve its capabilities and performance in doing so.

Kuwait's Domestic Crisis: Awaiting Amiri Wisdom

4.(C) Regarding Kuwait's ongoing domestic political crisis, Sh. Misha'al declined to predict next steps) e.g. when/whether the Amir might accept the cabinet's proffered resignation and/or dissolve parliament. He observed pointedly that there were shortcomings on the part of both parliament and government (an obvious, if indirect, dig at PM Nasser al-Mohammad), but concluded that the Amir had the wisdom to chart a successful course through the current pass. He also referred to the need to consider reforming the constitution) Something you Americans have done often) but offered no specifics. Misha'al also conveyed a blunt note of caution against any effort by the USG, or any other outside party, to interfere in support of any particular solution to the crisis.

GTMO Detainees: Where is Kuwait's Rehabilitation Program?

5.(C) In a review of current counter-terrorism issues, Misha'al reiterated his view that the GOK should not be

eager to have the remaining four Kuwaiti GTMO detainees transferred to GOK responsibility. Better, he said, to see them tried in the U.S. and, if convicted, jailed for whatever period. &We trust the law,8 he declared. In the absence of prosecution, he continued, their continued detention in at GTMO &causes political pressure for us.8 The Ambassador referred to bilateral discussion of the detainee issue during the Kuwaiti PM,s September visit to Washington, citing the absence of visible GOK follow-up on the rehabilitation program that PM Nasser al-Mohammad had touted to the President in arguing for transfer of the four Kuwaitis. Misha,al replied that instructions had been given with the GOK for &rapid measures8 to establish a rehabilitation center, but to the best of his knowledge movement had been slow and the project remained &in its initial stages.8

Embassy Security Exercise

6.(C) The Ambassador reviewed with Sh. Misha,al preparations for an elaborate crisis exercise scheduled at Embassy Kuwait during January, noting that the MFA had sent a diplomatic note asking that it be postponed due to the Arab Economic Summit scheduled some days afterward. Misha,al said the KNG was well along in preparing for full participation in the exercise, per the Embassy,s invitation. He expressed some irritation at the MFA,s request for postponement of the exercise, agreeing with the Ambassador that the exercise was even more urgently needed in the aftermath of the Mumbai attacks and should proceed as scheduled.

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